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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Common Animal Diseases/Hoof-and-Mouth Epidemic/
Government Efforts to Improve Livestock

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DATE DISTR 25 MAY 53

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most of the diseases from which horses suffered were caused by undernourishment. The large landowners were able to give their animals sufficient and proper food, but the poorer farmers did not have enough to feed their horses adequately in compensation for their continuous hard work. As a result, [redacted] had to treat them for digestive disturbances such as colic, and for orthopedic ills like irregularities of legs and hoof. Malformation and hoof-rot were likewise quite common among the equine population, as well as such skin diseases as mange and scabies. Tuberculosis and brucellosis were the most common diseases among cattle, but mastitis, or inflammation of the udder, and digestive disturbances such as rumen atonia were quite common. [redacted] also to do much obstetrical treatment for troubles accompanying or following calving. Cholera was not too commonly found among hogs due to vaccination, but did make its appearance from time to time and [redacted] quently to treat them for digestive tract disturbances.

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2. In 1938 and 1939 cattle in [redacted] part of Poland were attacked by hoof-and-mouth disease, which was imported from Spain and spread rapidly. At first the law required isolation and quarantine, but as the disease, despite precautions, continued to spread it was changed and veterinarians were authorized to transfer saliva from infected to healthy cattle in order to speed up the epidemic. It was found that the disease caused only one or two per cent fatalities among the beasts infected and if sick cattle were treated promptly bad aftereffects could be kept to a minimum. Since the government paid for the cattle which died, farmers cooperated in our plan and the epidemic was over in a remarkably short time. In carrying out our treatments we had to make use of whatever remedies were most available and cheapest. Mouths of infected cattle were rinsed with a vinegar and water solution and udders were rubbed with home made ointments, generally composed of camphor, iodine and lard. A solution of one or two per cent caustic soda proved an effective disinfectant. Aftereffects in udders and feet

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sometimes caused recovery to be slow, and required constant attention. Naturally, during and after the infection the cattle had to have soft diets, and lesions in the hoofs were treated with pyocyanin, while ointments were applied to udders until they returned to normal. The hoof-and-mouth disease also attacked hogs in our area, but by isolation and disinfectants we were able to keep its incidence among them to a minimum. A few children also became ill from drinking raw milk at this time.

3. The Polish government, aside from preventive and curative measures during epidemics, took little active part directly in veterinary work. It encouraged but did not require vaccination against cysipelas and hog cholera, which precautions had to be paid for by individual farmers. Indirectly the government subsidized breeders' associations for livestock improvement and emphasized animal husbandry at agricultural schools. It also promoted "winter schools" for sons of farmers, in which visiting teachers offered 10-week courses during the time when farm labor was light. Afterwards it offered prizes at breeders' association exhibits for those who had attended these courses. The Polish government also furnished stallions which stood for small fees at copulation points throughout the country. At each such point there would be two stallions, one of the light variety, used for riding mostly, and the other of the heavy, draft horse type. Since the government was interested chiefly in light horses for cavalry and artillery work it encouraged their breeding, but the farmers with an eye to their own needs generally preferred the services of the heavy type. Military agents came through the country periodically to buy up light horses, and thus encouraged an increase in their numbers.
4. During the German occupation, 1939-1944 in every district each farmer had to pay a levy in meat, grain, hay and livestock. This did not do much to deplete the horses of the country, but the numbers of cattle and hogs were seriously decreased.
5. Since drugs and other medications used [redacted] were not readily available every veterinarian was forced to have his own drug store. Pharmacology was an important part of the curriculum in both the Lwow and Warsaw veterinary schools. When he started into practice each veterinary began his own herb garden, acquired his stock of chemicals and whenever required compounded his own medicines and ointments, generally utilizing the cheapest and often fairly primitive components.

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